



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
Operations Center
March 24, 1988

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Charles E. Allen
National Intelligence Officer for Warning
Central Intelligence Agency

FROM: Joseph E. Lake
Director, Operations Center

SUBJECT: NOIWON Modernization: Your memo of March 11, 1988

I believe it is important to move forward with NOIWON modernization as soon as possible. Should it be possible to shorten the implementation timeframe, or perhaps even upgrade the system incrementally, this should be carefully considered. Nevertheless, my key concern is reliability, both for a new system and for the current system. The current system suffers from degradation in voice quality; on at least one occasion a NOIWON was terminated prematurely because conferees were unable to understand each other.

My major concerns are as follows, in order of importance:

Reliability

The new system must be one hundred percent reliable and must be immediately available in a crisis. The current system should be maintained as a backup for at least three months after the installation of the new system.

Speed of Activation

Any site should be able to initiate a conference in well under one minute. One of the disadvantages of the current system is that the White House operator must individually ring each participant, delaying the onset of the conference. The 1983 IHC proposal seems to deal with this problem by automatically ringing all sites as soon as any site picks up.

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Clarity

Voice quality should be excellent, even with all sites on line. Occasional poor voice quality is a major problem with the current system. The 1983 proposal includes use of the current KY-3 encryption equipment and lines, which leads me to wonder whether the new system would really improve clarity.

Simplicity

Since the system will be used in crisis situations, simplicity is very important; there should be no complicated procedures to use or numbers to dial. The 1983 proposal seems ideal in this respect, since it requires nothing more than picking up an extension to initiate a NOIWON.

Modes

Only voice mode should be supported. Anything else would risk complicating the system and would make it more difficult to use in a crisis. In addition, all current Washington NOIWON sites except Justice are on the Washfax and SVTS circuits (Justice will have SVTS in the near future), so these capabilities are already available if they are needed.

Recording Capability

I believe institutionalized, system-wide taping of NOIWON's could inhibit the free flow of information, which would be undesirable in a crisis. If any ambiguities remained after the conclusion of a NOIWON, a site could reconvene the call or call another participant directly using standard secure voice phones. However, since some centers tape NOIWON's on their own, system-wide taping may be preferable in the interest of uniformity.

Expandibility

Provision for future expandibility should be included. Although I have no objection to including additional sites to monitor NOIWON's, adding additional participants would degrade the usefulness of the system and should not be considered at this time.

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Other Considerations

The only feature not included in the 1983 proposal that I would add is a display to indicate which sites are in the conference and which site is speaking at any given time. This would make it clear which site is providing the current information. It would be more useful than the proposed recorded announcement, which should be omitted. //

State would require six phones:

- S/S-O Watch Officer
- S/S-O Emergency Action Officer
- S/S-O Secure Voice Room (with speaker phone)
- INR/IS/CIS 7th floor
- INR/IS/CIS 6th floor
- INR/IS/CIS cell, 7th floor Task Force 1 (plug-in handset)

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